

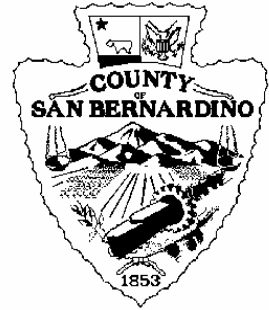
NEWS

From the Office of

Brad Mitzelfelt

Supervisor, First District
San Bernardino County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 28, 2007



For information, contact
John Richardson (909) 556-4129
www.sbcounty.gov/mitzelfelt

Supervisors to Locate New County Building in Hesperia

SAN BERNARDINO - The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors today unanimously selected a 4.42-acre site within the City of Hesperia for locating a new High Desert Government Center building project.

The four Supervisors present approved an agreement to acquire the property from the City of Hesperia for the construction of a proposed 60,000 square-foot government center. The proposed location of the County-owned building is on the northwest corner of Smoke Tree Street and 7th Avenue, adjacent to the new City Hall and the new Hesperia Branch Library.

"This new Government Center will give High Desert residents a conveniently located facility where they can conduct business with the County, all in one place," said Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt, whose First District includes the Victor Valley. "Some of the services to be offered in the new facility are not even currently available in the High Desert. This facility will bring more services closer to High Desert residents so they don't have to drive to San Bernardino to take care of their business with the County."

As a part of the agreement, the City of Hesperia will waive City fees and utility connection fees, provide off-sites and utility connections to the site, and landscape the perimeter of the site at no cost to the County. The value of the land, fee waivers and other improvements offered by the City is in excess of \$1.5 million.

In the past several months the San Bernardino County Real Estate Services Department (RESO) has researched real estate listings and physically surveyed numerous parcels in the Victor Valley area to identify possible locations. Fifteen vacant parcels were initially located that fit the search criteria. All four Victor Valley municipalities submitted proposals for potential sites. Ultimately, the Hesperia parcel was recommended due to the fact that it was most responsive to the Request for Proposals criteria, which include the parcel size, convenience to customers, availability of mass transit, range and location of services available to County employees, availability and cost of infrastructure, and cost of the property.

In the interim since the selection process began, the City of Hesperia was able to alleviate concerns from some Supervisors about traffic conditions along the Main Street and 7th Street corridors of the City. The city identified the following improvements that would increase access to the Government Center and civic center:

- Widening Main Street from I-15 east to 11th Avenue to three lanes in both directions
- Widening 7th Avenue from Main Street north to Willow Street
- Widening Cottonwood Avenue from Main Street North to Bear Valley Road

Supervisor Mitzelfelt said he felt that the Hesperia civic center site is the most cost-effective and readily deliverable location for this important facility. "We have an opportunity to build a first-class facility and consolidate county general-fund operations in a convenient location for our employees and customers alike. I felt that the time was now to get this project moving before we enter an economic downturn and potentially lose the funds we have set aside for this building," Mitzelfelt added. He further pointed out that the last time a desert government center was indefinitely delayed it took seven years for economic conditions to return to this point of feasibility.

"This is an exciting time in the High Desert," Mitzelfelt said. "Now, with all four Victor Valley Cities having modern city halls, the County will soon have a state-of-the-art building of its own to complement the improving state of our civic facilities.

"This Hesperia building will be a big draw that will help Hesperia's downtown area thrive as a vibrant business center," Mitzelfelt added, "And it's a good investment for the taxpayers because we will save millions of dollars in lost equity as we've been making lease payments for rented buildings for far too many years."

Departments currently anticipated to be located in the new facility include: Agriculture/Weights and Measures, Board of Supervisors, Fire Marshal, Human Resources, Land Use Services, Public Health (Environmental Health Services), Assessor, Public Works, Registrar of Voters, Treasurer/Tax Collector, and Veterans Affairs.